3-6-02

LAVC Godspell production had them lying in the aisle

see page 3

Monarchs let title slip away

see page 6

Black history month ends in style

see page 5

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The Valley Star

VOLUME 57, ISSUE NO. 2 | MARCH 6, 2002 | LOS ANGELES VALLEY COLLEGE

Tempers Flare In Parking Lot Madness

BY STERLING ANDREWS
STAR REPORTER

Horns blast. Turn signals flicker. Booming bass rattles the windows of waiting cars, none of which seems to be going anywhere. As usual, parking lot A is packed.

"Oh, it's awful," said student Karen Nalbandin as she scurries to the bungalows from a lucky spot. "And all the other parking lots are too far away."

Like nearly 7,000 other students at Valley College, Nalbandin's evening class is located just yards from the coveted lot near the corner of Burbank Boulevard and Fulton Avenue. Twice each day once at around 9 a.m. and again at 6 p.m.), thousands of students attempt to find open spaces in a lot that holds only a few hundred; tempers run high and traffic spills out through the narrow Fulton street entrance.

"When [lot A] is full, people get stressed out," said David Rivera, an officer with the campus police. "They drive at excess speeds and exhibit signs of road rage."

Rivera spent mornings during the first two weeks of the spring semester directing traffic through lot A, allowing motorist in only when he was sure there was an open parking space – or turning time-pressed students away from the crammed lot.

"The safety of our students is our primary concern," said Rivera, who added that since the curb along the interior perimeter of the lot was painted red, eliminating roughly 40 parking spaces, the lot fills much quicker.

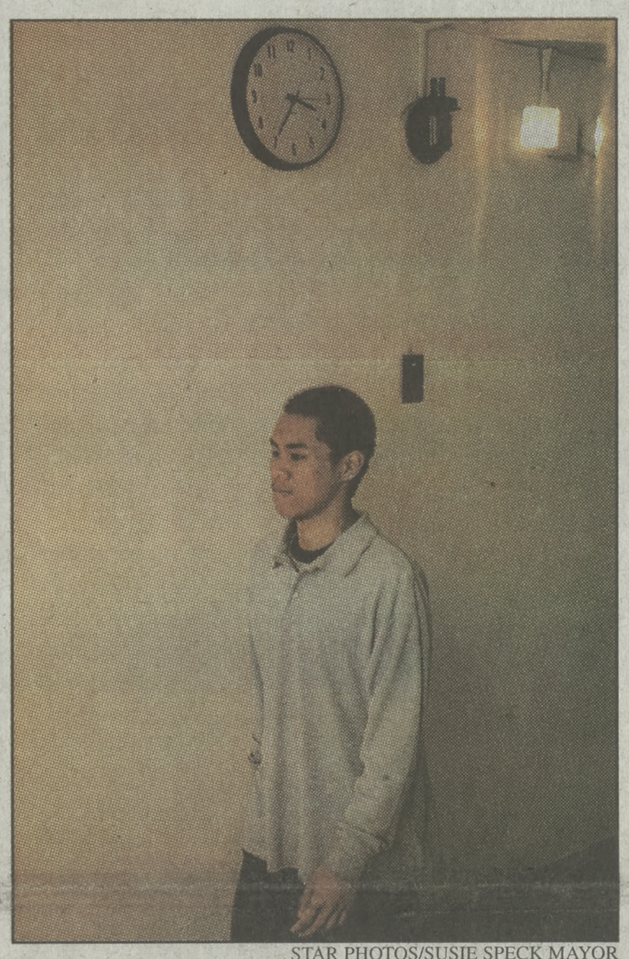
"If a car or building or anything else was on fire, the fire department needs to have access to it," he said.

The addition of the fire lane was the result of an accident earlier this year. A student, attempting to enter the foreign language building, fell from his wheelchair and needed the paramedics. Emergency vehicles were unable to park close to the building because there was no established

See 'PARKING' on p. 4

STAR PHOTO/RACHEL TELLER
Drivers circle around parking lot A in hopes of finding a parking spot.

Lights Out at LAVC



STAR PHOTOS/SUSIE SPECK MAYOR
Ernie Blumendberg and Heather Davenport talk to Grant High School principal, Joseph Walker, as they survey the charred wood poll where the tarnsformer exploded, causing a power outage throughout a two-mile radius. Jeremy David walks down the hall while emergency lights guide his way after power went out all over campus.

Textbook Prices: What are the Choices?

BY RICK COCA
STAR REPORTER

The price of college textbooks is ever increasing. Like fist fights on Jerry Springer, that's a given. Some books, however, cost more than others, putting a financial strain on many students who, like Francisco Guerrero, are struggling to keep up. "I think the prices are pretty high," said the 20-year-old business major. He was recently in the campus bookstore trying to find a buyer for one of his books in order to purchase another. "The used ones [in the bookstore] are still too high," said Guerrero.

"We're totally in a catch-22 here," said campus store manager Claudette Burns. "We don't make decisions as to which books to use." Professors and department heads have academic freedom in selecting books and materials for their classes. Their choices are numerous. Publishers send sales representatives to colleges throughout the school year to try to sell professors on their books. Often, these books include CD-Roms, study guides and colorful graphics that raise the price.

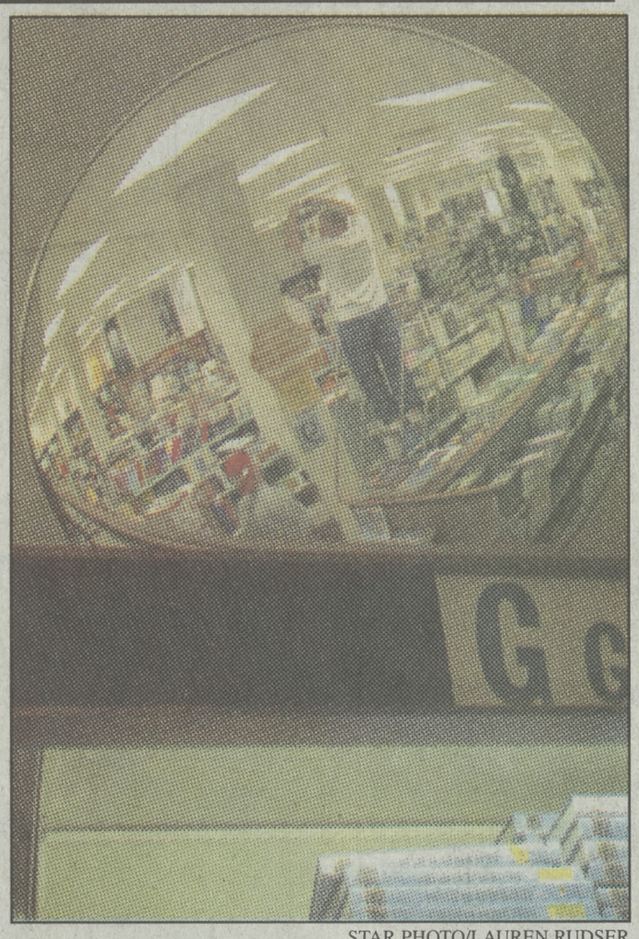
"Book prices are high," said Burns. "If you get your bite of knowledge out of it, then it was worth it. If the teacher doesn't use the book, then you feel ripped off."

The catch-22 syndrome also applies to professors dealing with publishers.

"We're a bit suspicious when they come out with a new edition," said math professor and bookstore committee member Leon Marzillier. "We're captive to that. You can't use a fifth edition when they've printed a sixth. Sometimes the updated versions are inferior. In the old days the books were much simpler and better even. Now they fill them up with bells and whistles."

Nevertheless, they keep coming. New and more elaborate editions come out every few years because publishers only make money on new books. Marzillier tries to select a book with as few graphics and multi-colored typeface as possible. Each professor must balance the need for a strong text with the financial limitations of many of his or her students. Occasionally, oversights happen.

See 'BOOKSTORE' on p. 4



STAR PHOTO/LAUREN RUDSER
Employee Jimmy Wang posts an ad in the campus bookstore.

Lion's Den Lacks Bare Necessities

BY SERENA DANIELS
STAR REPORTER

The long-anticipated Lion's Den is scheduled to open sometime this month. Wonderful, so what's the hold-up?

Although there is plenty of evidence of construction and people can occasionally be seen moving in equipment, the fact remains that Valley is still without its den.

The Associated Student Union announced their plans to open the new den back in September 2001 and it looked as if there were going to be no delays in its construction of the den. Video games, couches and a pool table were installed. As the grand opening was approaching, the new equipment mysteriously started disappearing and people all over campus began wondering when it was going to open.

"I thought they were supposed to have that [Lion's Den] finished a long time ago," said Jennie Monroy, a student.

Valley has had a Lion's Den for quite a while. It was created for students so they could have a place designed specifically to

See 'LION'S DEN' on p. 4

Explosion Places Valley in the Dark

BY SERENA DANIELS
STAR REPORTER

A transformer near Valley College and Grant High School exploded Tuesday disrupting power at both schools and leaving them in the dark for more than an hour.

"There was a big kaboom," said Emily Nalbandian, a student at Grant.

At 3:35 p.m. the power in most buildings went out, causing many teachers to dismiss class and preventing others from working. Some left their offices while a few stayed inside to wait for the power

See 'EXPLOSION' on p. 4

Valley Donates to Blood Supply

BY CHRISTINA GRATE AND NICOLE SUNKES
STAR REPORTERS

Of the 14 million pints of blood donated in the United States annually, Southern California uses 208,000 pints per year, with Los Angeles alone consuming 4,000 of them per day, for everything from treating hemophiliacs to emergency surgeries, according to a health-related website.

Valley College will hold a blood drive March 11 from 9 a.m. to 3p.m. in Monarch Hall. The blood drive is sponsored by USC Blood Donor Center, and is organized on campus by Lisa Negrete, ASU Commissioner of Social Affairs, and Barbara Pearlman, and Brandy Rodriguez of the Student Health Center. Van Nuys High School magnet medical school program students will assist with the donations.

"We are hoping for 50 [or more] people to donate," says Brandy Rodriguez.

Unfortunately, not everyone is optimistic about donating blood. Negrete said that many people do not have the time or that they are afraid.

"People are afraid either because of their fear of needles or because of a bad experience they had in the past," Negrete said.

To donate blood, people must bring a photo ID, be at least 17 years of age, and weigh at least 110 pounds. Donors must eat a nutritious meal and drink plenty of water prior to donating, and if you have had a tattoo or body piercing within the past year, you will not be eligible to donate.

People who are unable to donate at the Valley College blood drive, but would like to sometime in the future, can contact their local Red Cross offices. The Van Nuys office can be reached at (818) 376-1700, and the Burbank office at (818) 842-5295, or can the Red Cross at (800) GIVE-LIFE.

Opinion

HAHN vs. PARKS: Race & Politics in L.A.

BY RICK COCA

Comedian Bob Hope appeared in a movie where he played a soldier standing on a battlefield between two warring factions holding a two-sided flag. The opposing enemies could only see their own insignia on the flag. As both sides cheered, Bob began to march and in his excitement --- did an about face. Bob's flag was soon riddled with bullets.

Mayor James Hahn's political flag is a bit tattered these days. Like Bob he's learning that you cannot serve two masters. In his refusal to back Police Chief Bernard Parks for a second, five-year term, many feel Hahn has snubbed the black community. They, along with conservative, predominately white voters from the Valley, were the dominant reason he was elected mayor last year. Mayoral candidate Hahn also received the endorsement of The Police Protective League (LAPD's union). Trying to satisfy two groups so fundamentally opposed to each other (I, like Mayor Hahn, will link the cops and conservatives together) is bound to implode on you sooner or later. Sooner has arrived.

The mayor has stated that race had nothing to do with his decision and we'll take his word on that, but race has everything to do with how he got in this position to begin with.

On Hahn's tidy list of "things he hates about Park's policies," the only two that matter are the shortage of police officers, due to transfers and retirement, and the low moral on the force. The Police Protective League has said that over 90 percent of their officers don't have confidence in chief Parks. What a surprise. They haven't been in love with a chief since (sniffle, sniffle) Daryl Gates.

Parks is an enigma. On the one hand, he's a staunch disciplinarian who makes his officers endure each and every citizen complaint. On the other, he's "old school" LAPD, backing officers in controversial shooting deaths of minorities; trying to block the Feds from coming in after the Rampart debacle; and refusing to initiate a racial profiling study. Had the chief been white, these hard-line stances would've resulted in a severe "no justice, no peace!" response from many, instead of a few, black and Latino leaders.

Why aren't the cops showing Bernie any love? One, they wanted to work 12-hour shifts, three days a week. Parks said no but Hahn said yes. Two, good cops and I know a few - have had to endure citizen complaints that border on the ridiculous. "He was being sarcastic when he wrote me the ticket." I've had sarcastic waiters serve me cold soup. Should I be able to file a criminal complaint against them? And three, he's black. The Police Protective League has never had a black member on its board of directors and has had a horrendous reputation in dealing with minorities. Race has nothing to do with it, right?

Speaking of race, did you know that Hahn and his campaign were investigated for wrongdoing in last year's mayoral race for allegedly getting a few wealthy Indian tribes to put out $350,000 to defeat Antonio Villaraigosa? On top of that our fine mayor has come under even more fire for promising, out of the blue, $25,000 in unsolicited grant money to three African-American Churches, before his anti-Bernie announcement. To their credit, two of the churches tore up the checks.

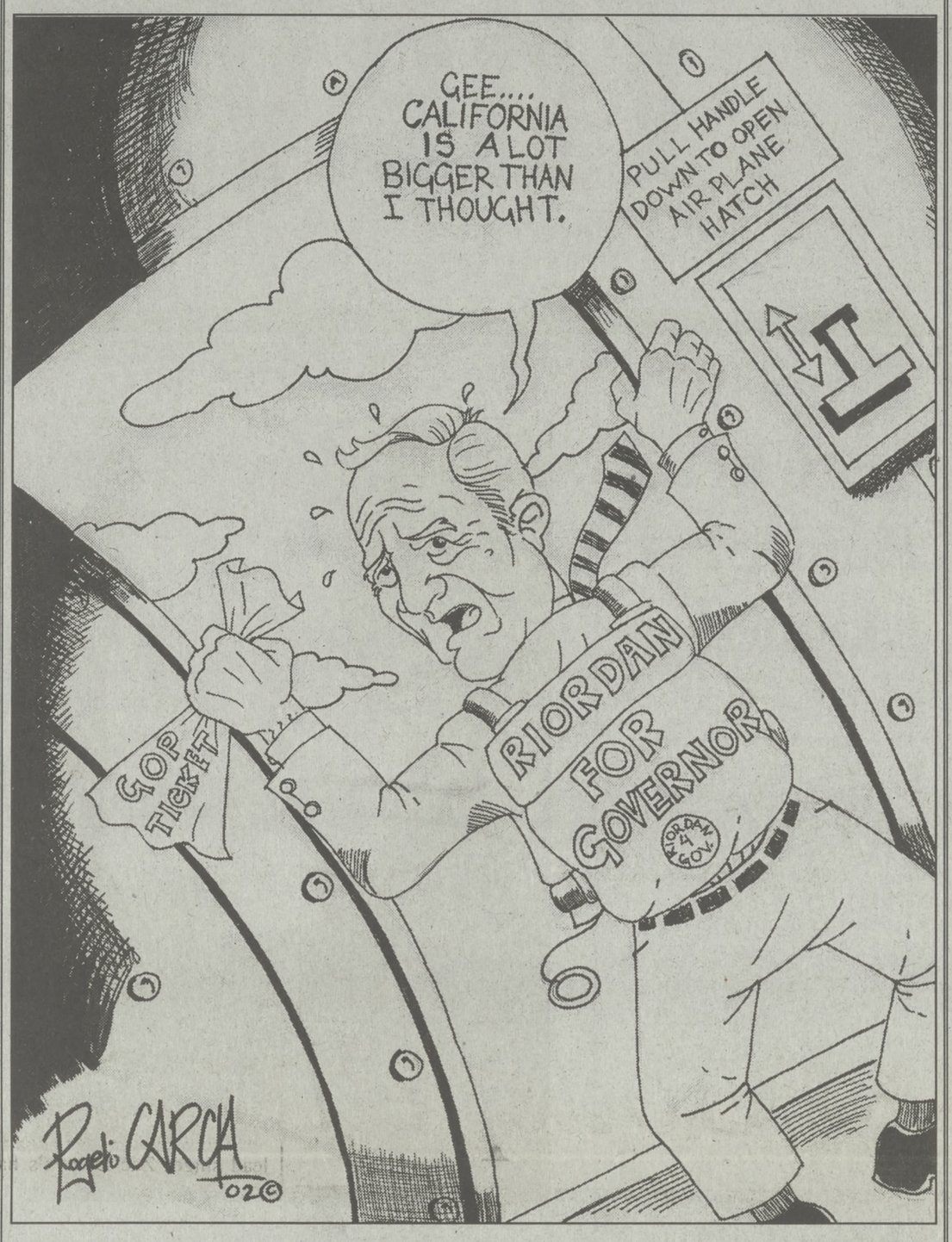
Should the black leaders who backed James Hahn known better? Yes. If they really wanted a liberal mayor who would've made the LAPD a more progressive department with or without Bernard Parks, they would've backed Antonio Villaraigosa.

Race was, and still is, a major factor in how this soap opera began and ultimately will end. Consider this: Despite the fact that in many ways Chief Parks is exactly like his white predecessors, many in the black community want him to stay because at the end of the day, as a black man, he feels their pain. Mayor Hahn gained their trust because of his father - who has been called a champion of black people - despite the potentially damaging alliances the mayor made with the police union and white Valley conservatives.

What about Antonio Villaraigosa? Did he lose an election entirely on merit? Was he too liberal, or was it because some white conservatives and blacks, feeling their power waning in a city where the Latino population continues to grow, didn't want to help create a Super Chicano? I'm just asking.

Now, instead of gaining a true reformer at the helm of the LAPD, we're going to get - after Hahn's hand-picked Police Commission fires Parks) - a police chief that the union loves and adores. Given the choices, we can all pray to the Chief-of-Police Gods to let Bernie stay, and while we're at it we can pray that those in power start judging each other on the content of their character and not on the color of their skin.

A Long Way Up From L.A. Mayor


GEE.... CALIFORNIA IS A LOT BIGGER THAN I THOUGHT.
PULL HANDLE DOWN TO OPEN AIR PLANE HATCH
GOP TICKET
RIORDAN FOR GOVERNOR
RIORDAN 4 GOV.
Rogelio GARCIA '02

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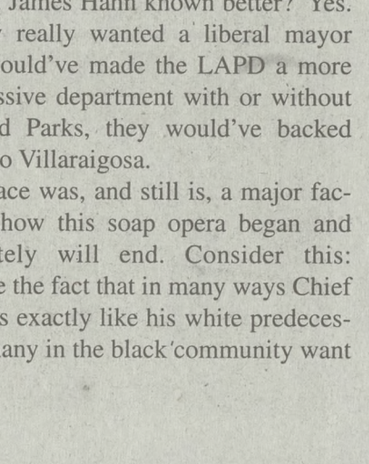
CampusView

Do you think LAPD Chief Bernard Parks should be reappointed by the police commission?

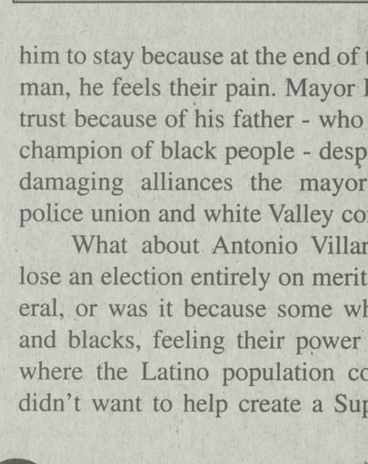
BY LAUREN RUDSER
STAR REPORTER

STAR PHOTOS/LAUREN RUDSER



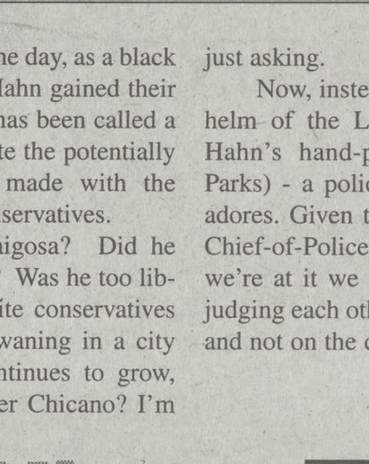
"Why not? I don't really mind about things like that because I hate cops anways."

Peter Smith
Mathematics



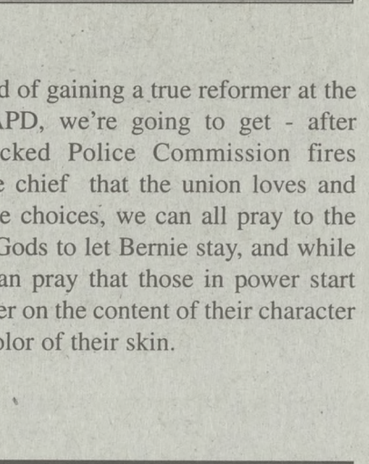
"I think he should. He's been doing a substantial job. He's gotten criticism but he's still able to get the job done. Why shouldn't he?"

O'Bryant Gray
Engineering



"Honestly, I don't really mind. I don't wish to involve my life in politics."

Will Larry
Computer Science



"Yes, overall crime is lower and he has gotten the community to interact more with the police department "

Kamms Saymoontry
Liberal Arts

Write a letter to the editor
StareditorsLAVC@hotmail.com
Please include your name and telephone number
Letter may be edited. Deadline: Friday 4:30 p.m.

FIND ADDITIONAL STORIES AND PHOTOS EXCLUSIVELY ONLINE AT
http://www.lavalleystar.com

Valley Life

Campus Scene

BY SKYLAR LENOX

■ **Career/ Transfer Center**
Career transfer center is open to all Valley College students wishing to either transfer to a four year college or change their career. Hours: Mon. and Tue. 9 a.m.-7 p.m., Wed. and Thur. 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Friday 9 a.m.-1 p.m. in administration 126. For more information call (818) 947-2646

■ **CSU Northridge and UC Riverside Applications**
CSUN will only be accepting applications for Fall 2002 until March 15th. UC Riverside is still accepting applications for Fall 2002.

■ **CSU Open House and Transfer Days**
CSU Maritime Academy campus tours : Mon.-Friday, 10:30 a.m. Sign-up required. Contact/Reservations (707) 654-1330.**CSU Stanislaus** campus tours: Monday-Friday, 9 a.m. Contact/Reservations (209) 869-3262 or by e-mailing Outreachhelpdesk@san.csustan.edu. **Cal Poly Pomona** Friday, March 15. Contact/Reservations (909) 869-3262. **CSU Fresno** at the North Gym. Sat. March 16. Contact/ Reservations call (562) 985-5358.

■ **At the Career/Transfer Center**
CSU Los Angeles, March 7 10 a.m.-2 p.m. **CSU Northridge** March 11 and March 18 10 a.m.-12 pm., 5 p.m.-7 p.m.**UC Santa Cruz** March 14, 1p.m.-3 p.m. **Woodbury** March 18, 4 p.m.-7 p.m. **Northern Arizona** 10 a.m.-1 p.m.

■ **Fine Arts Festival**
Wed.March 15 8 p.m. Main Stage.

■ **Valley Symphony Orchestra**
Some Operatic Treats. Robert Chauls, Conductor. Featuring Elin Carlson, Soprano, Saturday, March 9. Mainstage, Little Theatre, 8:00 p.m. Admission charge

■ **Job Fair 2002**
Wed. March 13, 10 a.m.- 1 p.m. Monarch Square.

■ **Great Expectations: The Transition to Parenthood**
Sat. March 16, from 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. The seminar covers prenatal development and care, childbirth, transition to parenthood, and postpartum depression. $10 which includes meals. Deadline is March 7th. For more information contact Tracey Baca in the Child Dev. office in MS #112 (818) 947-2584.

Godspell

STAR PHOTO AND TEXT /MARCY PETRIQUE

Captivating performances ensured that there was never a dull moment on the stage of "Godspell," presented by the Valley College theater arts department. The refreshingly talented casts's rendition of "a musical based upon a Gospel according to St. Matthew," led the audience through a range of emotions from uncontrollable and spontaneous laughter to an ending that left many theater goers in tears. It was a full house for "Godspell," directed by Pete Parkin with musical director Jennifer Kelly and choreographer Marjorie Vander Hoff which ran for two consecutive weekends in the Horseshoe Theater.

The Keys to the Kingdom of Unclaimed Treasures

BY LINDA TOPDJIAN
STAR REPORTER

Retired police Officer Frank Dallas didn't like to waste time, so he took some glue and dozens of lost keys to try and help people find their way.

Dallas used his spare time to create a one-of-a-kind lost and found sign for the Valley College Sheriff's Department. The sign hangs on the wall inside bungalow 59.

"I think its amazing and a very creative work of art, made from the unclaimed keys from over the years," said senior officer assistant Nora Geller When I admire the LOST AND FOUND PLAQUE, I think of him."

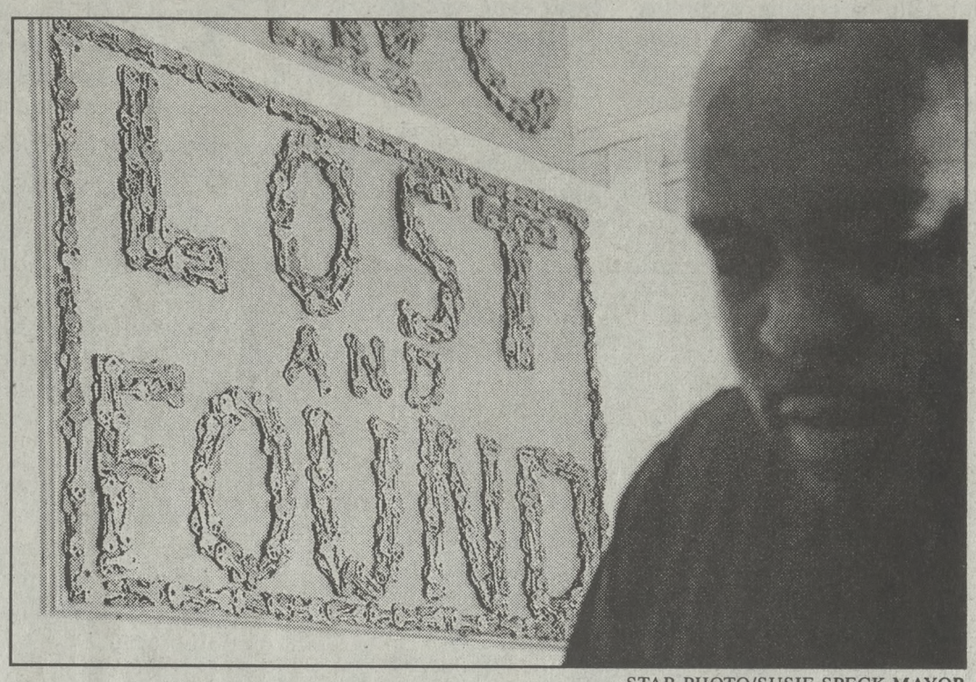
He used the huge collection of unclaimed keys from over the year from the lost and found department. The sign is shaped with the brasss, unclaimed keys from cars, and houses to any variety of keys to read lost and found. It is held together with epoxy glue.

The sign is proudly displayed high on the wall directly as a person walks in to the Valley Sheriff's Department.

Located at 5800 Fulton Avenue in Bungalow 59 next to the Business Journalism Building, and across from the Life Science Building.

To claim an item at the lost and found department, a person must show identification.

All kinds of things come in such as keys, wallets, books, clothing, CD players, cellular phones, eyeglasses, instruments, bikes, and lost identification cards.



STAR PHOTO/SUSIE SPECK MAYOR

The lost and found sign looms over the shoulder of Gregory Thomas as he fills out a report at the Sheriff's office. The sign, made up of 1000 lost keys, took Officer Frank Dallas about a month to create.

The phone number to call and ask about lost items is 818 947-2911.

The biggest item that was received was a guitar, and the biggest item unclaimed was a bike.

All items turned in anywhere on campus, do find their way to the lost and found at Bungalow 59, extension 2911.

This unique sign will be a legacy for this retired police officer for years to come; it was made to last and last.

"It's a very creative work of art and I enjoy looking at it daily; while on the job, it always gets my attention to admire it again."said Cadet Armine Davtian.

Concert Review: *Big In Japan*

BY STERLING ANDREWS
STAR REPORTER

Sweaty bodies bounced in a darkened room. A girl with a ponytail swayed with the music, not stopping to sip a Bud Light. A young man with Buddy Holly glasses nodded his head in full approval of the night's entertainment, his eyes fixed on lead singer Zac Damon's hands scurrying up and down the neck of his Fender Telecaster. Not a single stationary body stood in the Troubadour on Feb. 6; some mouthed the words to the songs, some smiled quietly, but all were focused on punk-pop rock group Big in Japan as they showered the venue with there melodic, high-energy sounds.

'Yeah, you know rock and roll?" joked guitarist Todd Smails after the show. "I play it." A boy in a safety pin riddled jacket swiped the set list as the band packed up, looking around to make sure no one saw lest he'd be mistaken for a groupie.

So what makes Big in Japan so good? Perhaps "the Toddball's" crazy, sugar-rushed demeanor onstage is to blame for the band's success. Maybe it's drummer Corky Pigeon's baby blue eyes or bassist Joey Travers's crass East coast accent. Ask Damon and he'll shrug his shoulders, smile sheepishly, hands deeps in the pockets of his black dickies, and mumble something about being glad people like the band.

Damon's rock resume reads like a punker's dreams, having been a member of bands like Screeching Weasel, Zoinks, and the Reno-based Crushstory, with whom he has just rejoined as the band's bassist. He collaborated in 1999 with Travers and Pigeon from Crushstory label-mates the Gain to form Big in Japan. The band had only been together for a few months when a division of Fat Wreck Chords, Honest Don's, recognized their talent and immediately signed them. Shortly after recording their full-length, Destroy the New Rock, Smails was added as a second guitarist, having formally played in The Honkeys and 66 Percent.

STAR PHOTO/STERLING ANDREWS

Zac Damon of Big In Japan sings and scurries up and down the neck of his Fender Telecaster guitar to a roaring crowd at the Troubador on Feb. 6.

Although Damon wrote all the songs on the album, the styles of all members' former bands shine through. Catchy, fast, (like Zoinks) tunes such as "Everyone's a Gain"-influenced songs like "Dig that Stupid Sound" and the crowd-pleasing "Hell Before Reno." Unlike most albums of the same genre, Destroy the New Rock doesn't slow down by the third or fourth track; explosions of noisy guitar and rattling drums combined with a quick and dulcet bass line fuel this energetic album from start to finish.

Rock star? Not quite. Step into the Starbucks on Topanga Canyon and Sherman Way and the Toddball himself may serve your brew. Even Corky Pigeon, former child star from the hit TV show "Silver Spoons," has a humble attitude about the band. So "sing along; no one's gonna bite you."

Going to Europe this summer? You can catch Big in Japan as they tour with idols "The Dickies.' Destroy the New Rock is available at most record stores, or you can download songs from http://www.mp3.com/biginjapan for free. For photos, schedules, merchandise and more, visit http://biginjapan.net.

Surprises Worth the Wait in 'Dragonfly'

BY RENEE ROSE BARRERA
STAR REPORTER

"Dragonfly" comes to us through these last dull weeks of the winter season when we've already finished the holiday leftovers from Christmas releases and are impatiently waiting for the summer hits.

Many would expect this film to be a flop, considering that Kevin Costner hasn't had a breakthrough hit since the mid 1990s. His name has been synonymous with box office disasters such as "Waterworld" and "The Postman" – making Costner the poster boy for actors to stay far away from the director's chair. In "Dragonfly," Costner portrays the disheartened widower, which is not too challenging since he's played this role before in the disappointing "Message in a Bottle." Through his strong portrayal as the determined Dr. Joe Darrow, Costner exceeded my expectations and surprised me with a stunning performance.

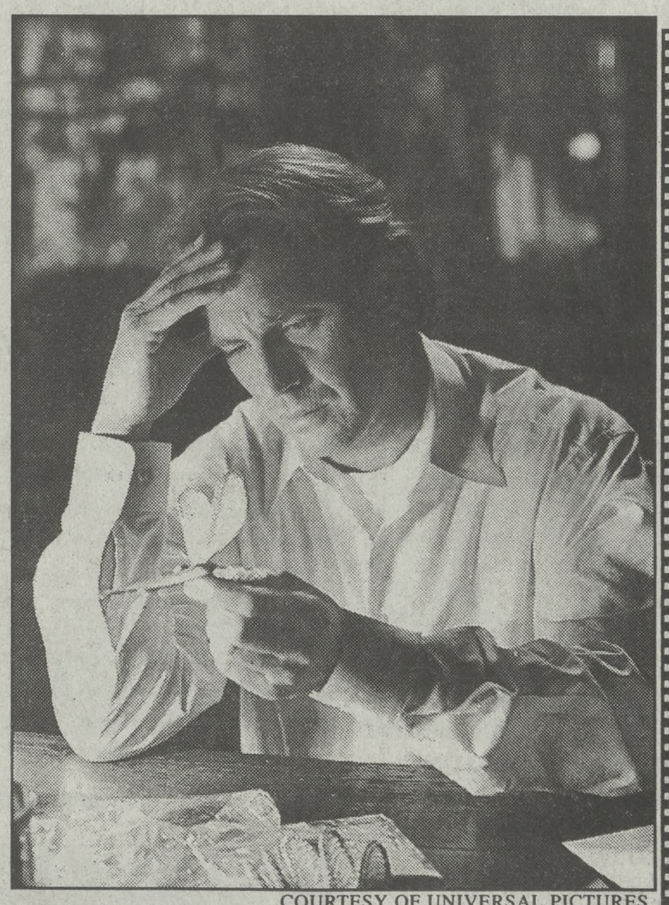
The first scenes show Venezuela, where Joe, based in Chicago, is on the phone with his wife Emily (Susanna Thompson) a volunteer doctor there. When the line abruptly disconnects, we're left with the assumption that it was the last time Emily and Joe speak. She gets on a bus with the rest of her patients to leave the desolate village. The pouring rain and muddy roads are difficult for the bus and it topples over a cliff.

The film fast-forwards six months later, and Emily's body is still missing. Costner enhances his intense performance when Joe does the heartbreaking task of storing away Emily's belongings. Joe struggles believing his soul mate is dead. He's in denial, especially when the presence of dragonflies, Emily's favorite symbol, surround him everyday. In one instance they mysteriously appeared outside his window, gathered by the hundreds. This is where the tagline of the movie jumps at us asking: "When someone you love dies…are they gone forever?"

Despite following advice from friends to take a break and grieve, Joe fulfills his promise to Emily and visits her patients at the pediatric oncology ward. In "Sixth Sense" fashion, the paranormal events ensue with each visit to Emily's patients. Instead of the haunting "I see dead people," it's the eerie, "You're Emily's Joe," voiced by cute sickly children. The chase begins to seek the truth behind the peculiar events Joe faces. From the cryptic messages Emily's patients say and the skeptic faces telling him to give up his quest, it tests the fine line between Joe's faith and sanity.

Mrs. Belmont, played by Kathy Bates, who is most likely to be named the American Judi Dench due to her frequent roles as the older confidant, is Joe's wisecracking neighbor that doubts Joe's premonitions throughout the film. While we see the brief appearances of fellow doctors, nurses and old college pals, Mrs. Belmont is the source for comic relief in an otherwise serious film.

The story moves very fast, and some of the scenes felt a bit too far fetched and even clichéd. This is much more dramatic and hits close to home with anyone who knows the pain of losing a loved one. "Dragonfly" presents the audience with a few surprises, especially with its amazing ending. It's a delight to see Costner back as the dramatic hero, since this time he finally gets it right.



COURTESY OF UNIVERSAL PICTURES

In "Dragonfly" Kevin Costner plays Dr. Joe Darrow who tests the fine line between faith and sanity when he refuses to believe his wife's death .

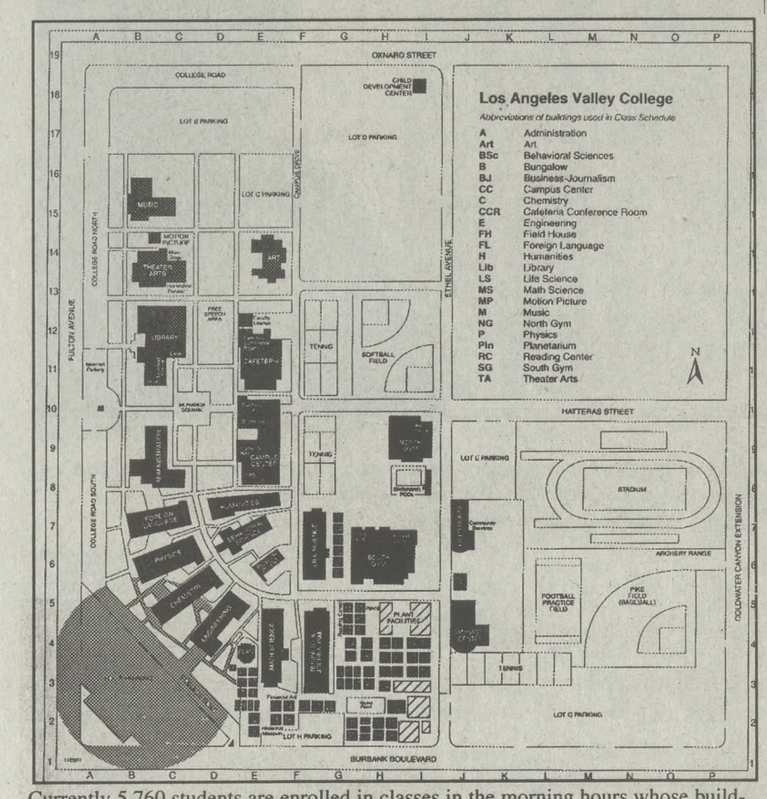
'Parking' *continued from page 1*

fire lane.

There are currently 5,760 students enrolled in classes in the morning hours whose buildings surround lot A. There are additional 1,500 students who attend classes that are close to lot A in the evening, according to records obtained from Administrative Affairs. Though not all students need individual parking spaces —some carpool, some take the bus and some are dropped off— campus authorities are urging students to use other lots when possible.

"We have enough parking now, it's just not close enough to the buildings," said President Tyree Wieder at a recent town hall meeting that addressed the issue of parking. "The plan is to create more parking close to the buildings."

Until then, campus authorities suggest taking the five-minute walk from rarely used lots near the music and art buildings or arriving as early as possible to ensure a good spot.



Currently 5,760 students are enrolled in classes in the morning hours whose buildings surround parking lot A, the gray highlighted area in the bottom right hand corner.

'Bookstore' *continued from page 1*

A few semesters ago, the Spanish department ordered the same book for three consecutive semesters. but the publisher changed the book each semester, making the last version obsolete. During that period new students were unable to buy used editions of the book, and students who had completed the course could not sell it back for anything more than wholesale.

What's a financially strapped student to do? Start with your professors. Are they requiring you to buy additional material that you don't need? Did they request that copies of the text be made available at the school library? At the end of the semester if the extras weren't necessary, let them know.

Before you shop around, make sure that the ISBN number is exact. There are many choices online, with some sites offering significant savings. Simply go to any search engine and type in "collegiate textbooks" and watch the magic happen, remember to include shipping and handling and order in time to receive your books to start the semester.

The student bookstore, although moderately priced in comparison to some online sites, generally has better deals on paperback selections than the big retailers. Another advantage in buying books from the student bookstore is you can sell them back to the store later. When doing so, bring your original receipt and book in good condition.

Some study guides may be returned provided that they're not written in or have pages torn out. Most importantly, make sure that the book you're returning has been ordered for the next semester's classes. If you don't see it stocked early, wait. The difference in your refund can be significant (50% of full price if it has been ordered compared to only 10% to 25% if not). The student bookstore suggests you wait until the semester begins to ensure you get the most money possible.

"Book prices are high. If you get your bit of knowledge out of it, then it was worth it. If the teacher doesn't use the book, then you feel ripped off."

-Claudette Burns
campus store manager

If you're short of cash, you can receive aid through the Student Services office.

"The Emergency Book Loan program allows students to borrow money [interest free] to pay for textbooks," said vice-president of student services, Yasmin Delahoussaye. "Each year," she said, "a generous faculty member anonymously donates $500 to the fund." "In the future I'd like to see books on CD-Rom where we could copy the books ourselves. It could be done for perhaps one-half or one-third of the current cost."

From the political front you can call your local assemblyman, and Valley College graduate, Richard Alarcon and ask him what's being done to control spiraling costs of textbooks and why publishers are allowed to charge a college bookstore more than a retail store for the same book. You might also ask him if a program to eliminate sales tax for textbooks, currently underway in a few other states, is in our future.

'Lion's Den' *continued from page 1*

hang out. But because no one was really aware of the old one, located in the basement of the Campus Center, plans were made to relocate it next to the cafeteria. Unfortunately, the campus still does not have a new Lion's Den and the old one has been shut down. So aside from the benches outside, there really is no place for students to meet.

According to Sherri Rodriguez, associate dean for student services and advisor to the ASU, the wait is partly based on whether the executive council will approve the vendors who are installing the pool tables.

"If ASU is going to be using the space along with a contracted company that profits from us, we need to get approval from the executive counsel and then lease it," said Rodriguez.

Other reasons for the delay include requests for a receptionist's desk and two conference tables where students can congregate, along with new carpeting which still needs to be installed.

The ASU realized the obstacles in January during the winter intersession. Rodriguez said that it was definitely a learning experience for her and others on the board.

Aside from the technicalities from the executive board and ASU, there are definitely signs of progress. So far, the couches are back and the big-screen television is installed with cable. Aside from the desk and tables that need to be approved, there should be no other problems with getting the rest of the equipment installed. The new den is scheduled to open by Mid-March.

'Explosion' *continued from page 1*

to resume at approximately 4:35 p.m.

"The transformer at Grant High School blew out and took out all the power in the area," said Rosemary Smith, an administrative secretary in student services.

The swift work of Department of Water and Power helped to get the electricity up and running, according to officials at plant facilities.

"We don't really expect any more problems with the electricity because DWP is working around the clock to make sure the power stays on," said Eric Franklin, a security officer at Valley.

Officials are still investigating the cause of the explosion and said there are no concerns for future problems.

There were a few students who hurried to the site of the blown transformer and some students walked the halls waiting for the lights to come back on. Campus police were also seen patrolling the school and reported no problems.

STAR PHOTO/SUSIE SPECK MAYOR

Students had been expecting to hang out in the Lion's Den since last semester but a number of hurdles have kept its doors closed.

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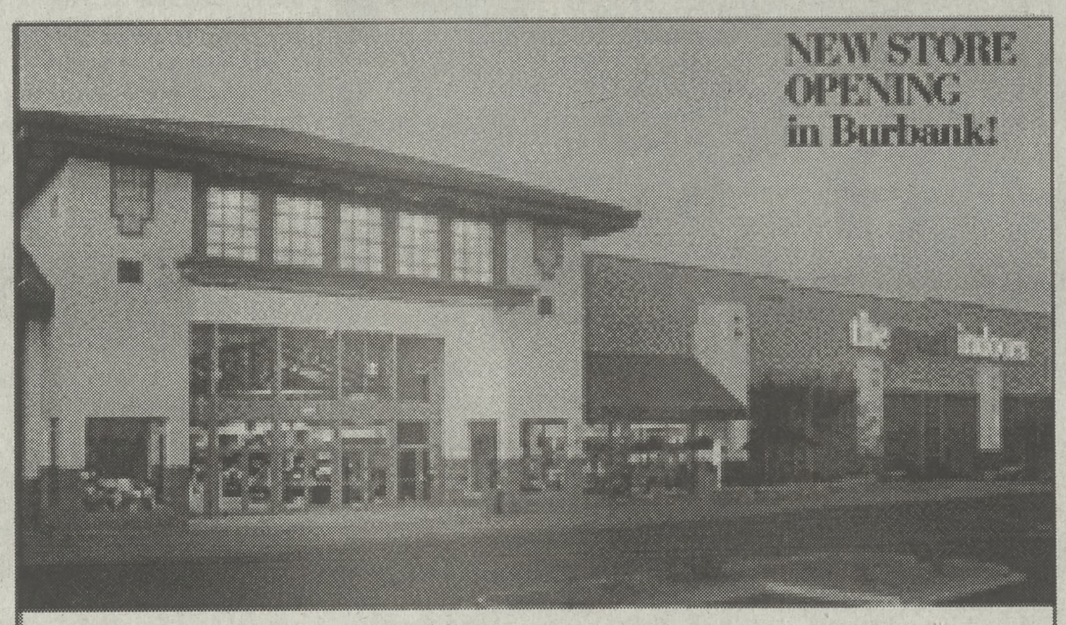

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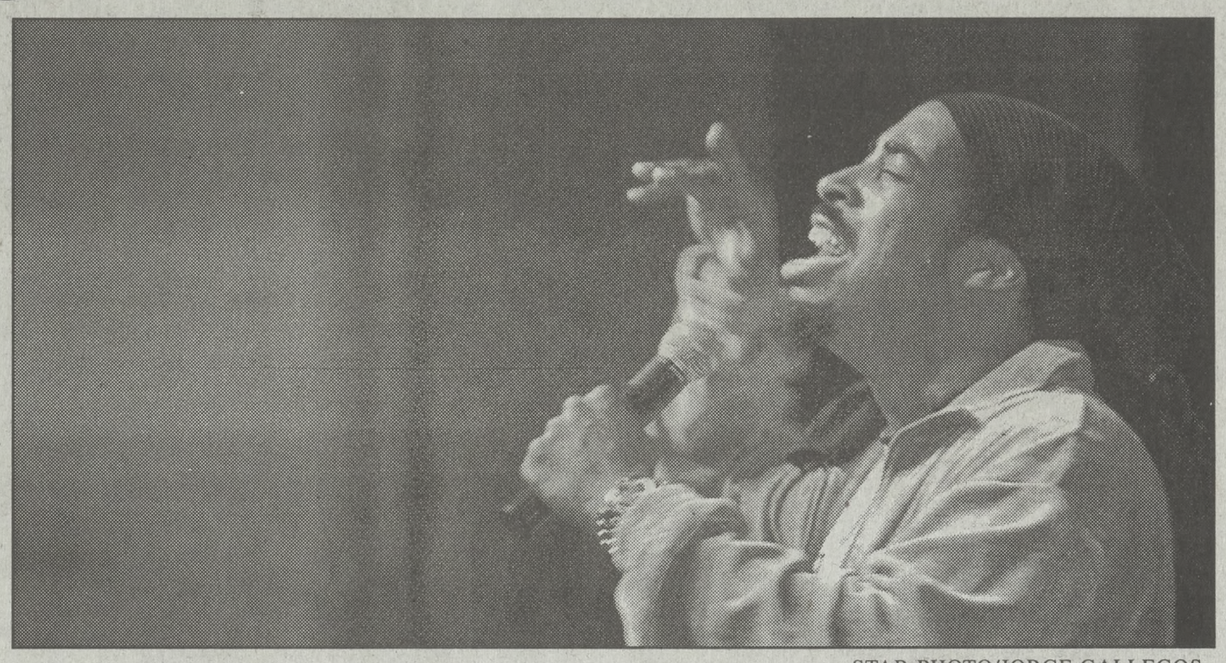
Celebrating a Rich Culture

STAR PHOTO/LAUREN RUDSER.

Linda Faye Johnson soars to the rythmic beat of the live African drums durring the West African Stilt Walker's performanse on the lawn of Monarch Square.



STAR PHOTO/JORGE GALLEGOS.

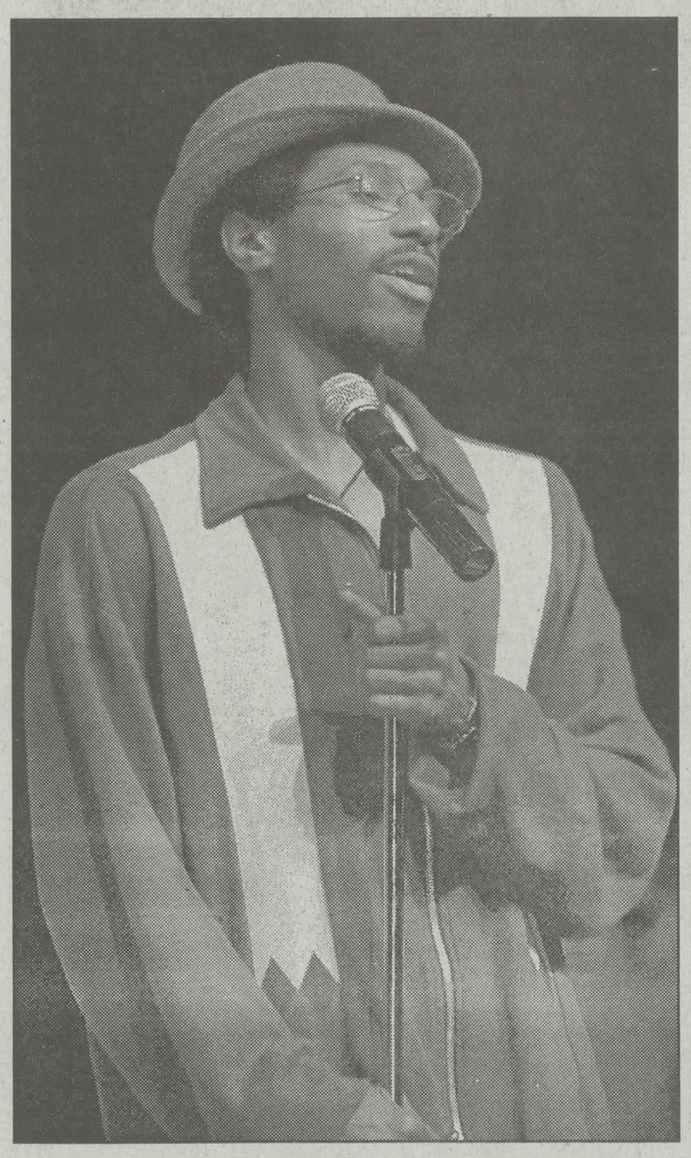
Sekou "The Misfit" making himself present at the Apollo Night.

STAR PHOTO/DANIEL COHEN.

Sandy Bowles, our ASU Fine Arts commisioner dances with one of the West African Stilt Walker.

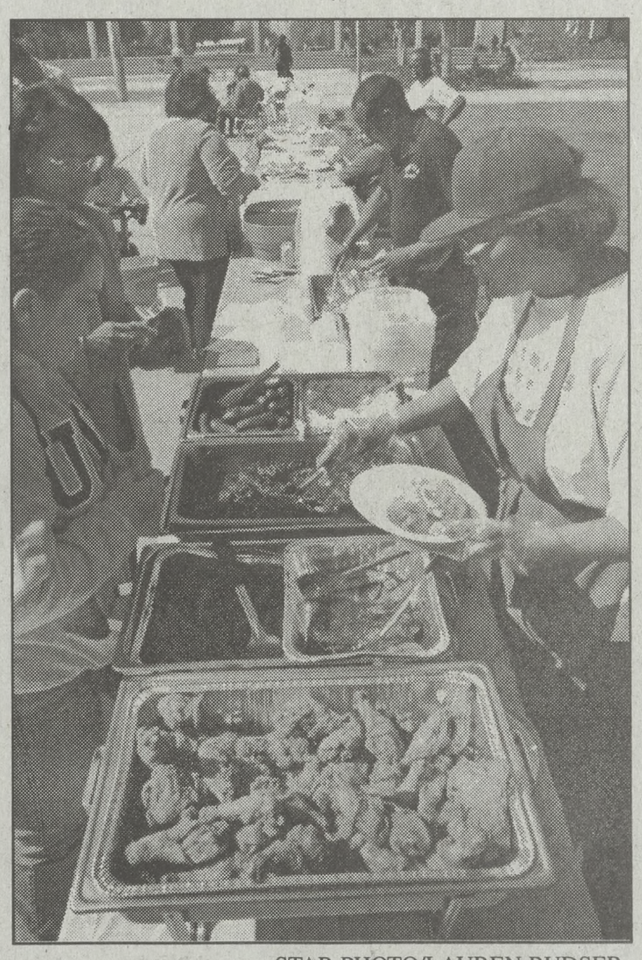
During the month of February all across the Los Angeles Valley College campus a series of events were held in celebration of Black History Month
From music to food, poets to dancers all took part in the festivities to commemorate their heritage and pass on their traditions, thoughts and culture.

Layout by Lauren Rudser.



STAR PHOTO/JORGE GALLEGOS.

BSU member and Apollo Night producer Gimel Hooper closing up the night with a series of personal thoughts.



STAR PHOTO/LAUREN RUDSER.

Juanita Washington dishes out some soul food durring Valleys celebration of Black History monthat the Soul Food Lunch.

Star Photo/DanielCohen.

Kenyatta Poole, a member of the Kabasa West African Drumand Dance Group, performs in the Valley quad.

STAR PHOTOS/SALVADOR AGUILAR

Valley's Midwin Francis leaps for a piece of the ball against College of the Canyons players. The Monarchs beat the Cougars 87-65 to advance to the playoffs.

STAR PHOTOS/SALVADOR AGUILAR

James Mitchell drives to the basket is halted by two defenders in a stunning upset Trade Tech beat Valley in overtime 84-80.

"If next season comes even close to what we have seen this year, then Valley is in for one hell of a ride."

-Coach Michelson

Monarch Men are Shocked by Trade Tech

BY PEDRO OLIVERA AND RICARDO MIRANDA
STAR REPORTERS

It was supposed to be an easy first-round game for the Monarchs men's basketball team. Valley came into the state championships with a record of 27-6 and a fourth ranking in the Southern California Regional Playoffs.

They hosted Los Angeles Trade Tech, the 29th ranked team, and it let a record-setting season slip away with a shocking 84-80 overtime loss.

Despite the unbelievable loss, Valley still had a spectacular season. It included an undefeated regular season and the best overall record in the history of Valley basketball.

"We had good team chemistry, and mix that with our talent, made for the right ingredients for a championship team," head coach Doug Michelson said. " We were a balanced team this season and we were very deep at every position. We had ten players we could call on.

"If next season comes even close to what we have seen this year, then Valley is in for one hell of a ride."

Three players from the Monarchs' team made the Western State Conference South Division All-Conference team. They are Ryan Abrahams, Jordan Walker, and Neverson White.

Experts said Valley had a legitimate shot at winning the regional title and making it all the way to the State Championships. But their effort fell well short on Saturday as they lost in the biggest upset of the season.

Although the final score appears to be close, it is not an indication of how the game went. Trade Tech came out strong and showed no fear against Valley.

"We ran into a very competitive and very physical opponent," Michelson said.

Maybe Valley underestimated their opponent. Taking for granted that their high rank would carry them to victory.

"We came out overconfident and they were shooting the ball sharply," said guard Rodney Billups. "We were rusty, and came out too excited."

It showed during the first half as Trade Tech took control of the game and Valley tried to catch up. Sharp shooting kept Trade Tech on top at the half, 42-35.

During the break Michelson tried to fire up the guys.

"I told them we needed to get it together and play, and show a better attitude," he said.

Trade Tech came out of the half and resumed its hot shooting. The Monarchs struggled, making unnecessary turnovers and shooting a poor 38 percent from the field, while allowing their opponent to shoot 48 percent.

Valley fought to send the game into overtime and tied the score at 71 before the final period.

Trade Tech outscored Valley, 13-9, in the extra period, which led to the heart-breaking Valley loss.

"We didn't come to play," Billups said. "We underestimated them."

STAR PHOTOS/SALVADOR AGUILAR

Valley catcher tags out runner from third in a recent loss to Irvine Valley College.

PEDRO OLIVERA
SPORTS EDITOR

Talkin' Sports

By now we've all seen what happened after the Los Angeles Lakers' victory over the Indiana Pacers. Every television and print media showed Kobe Bryant taking a swing at Cheryl Miller's little brother, Reggie. The two then wrestled into the scorer's table, where teammates had to separate them. The result was that Kobe received a two game suspension and a fine of $12,500. Miller also was suspended for two games and was fined $10,000.

Every media member seems to have the same reaction to the altercation. Kobe was wrong, he's crazy, and he is out of control. It is not fair that Miller got suspended for the same number of games that Kobe was. The NBA is just favoring Kobe because he is a bigger star and plays for the Lakers.

Now, I'm not condoning fighting. That should always be the absolute last resort, especially when the game is already over. Kobe should have exercised better judgment and just walked away. He cost himself two games and a nice chunk of change.

But we don't know the exact circumstance that led to their brawl. Kobe finally spoke to the media on Monday, but as expected, didn't reveal any details about what was said in the moments that led up to the fight. Miller released a statement on Sunday that read: "Kobe has other issues he has to deal with. They had nothing to do with me or the basketball game played Friday evening."

I hope no one believes that for a minute! Kobe clearly has issues other than basketball on his mind. But, throughout the years, Miller has been known for his instigating just as much as his deadly jump shot. He has gotten into it with the likes of celebrity fans, Spike Lee, and the greatest basketball player that ever lived, Michael Jordan. Miller probably knows what's going on with Kobe's personal life and used it to antagonize him. He is by no means an angel.

Now does that mean Kobe should have swung at him? Of course not! But this is not as bad as some people would want you to believe. In fact, I'll go as far as to say this is a good thing for Kobe.

Two years ago, a similar incident occurred with K.O. Kobe. Then New York Knick point guard Chris Childs and Kobe were talking smack to each other when Childs threw two sucker punches at Kobe. He looked foolish taking punches from a punk like Childs.

Kobe has grown a lot since then. Even though he is only 23 years old, he is widely regarded as one of the more mature players in the league. But there comes a time in a man's life when you have to stand up for yourself. Or as Kobe put it, "Sometimes, as a man, you have to do what you have to do."

A fight in sports where no one seriously gets hurt is a usually a good thing. It refocuses a player and fires him up for the stretch run. During the middle of a long season, when players tend get bored and lose track of the main goal - which the Lakers are infamous for - a fight is the kind of motivation that gets your eyes back on the prize.

In baseball, a bench-clearing brawl will spark a turnaround for a team who is struggling. In hockey, players are revered for playing the role of "enforcer" on their team. After a fight, the hockey player gets high fives all around for mixing it up with the opposition's goon.

To reiterate a point I made earlier, I don't believe in fighting to solve a problem on the basketball court. This isn't about the typical caveman attitude that has become the norm in our society. This is simply about a man who got pushed too far and wasn't going to take it.

Contrary to popular belief, this isn't the demise of the Lakers' season. Just like Shaquille O'Neal swinging at Brad Miller wasn't the end of the season. Any one who says otherwise is either looking for a story to tell or just is wishful thinking by someone who doesn't want to see the Lakers succeed.

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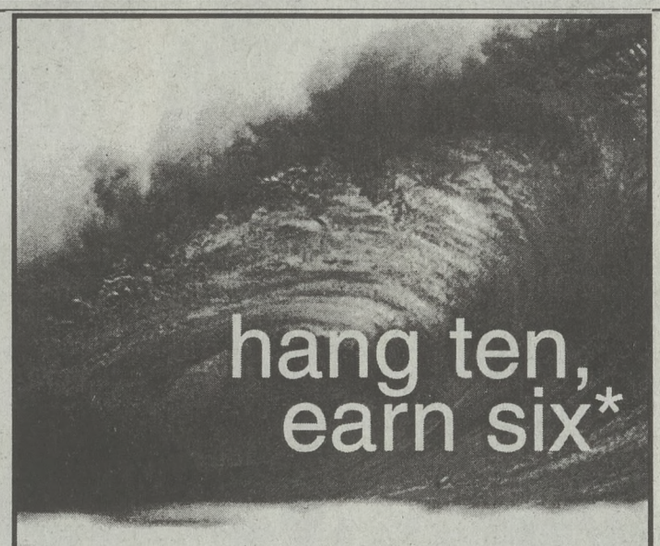

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